



Revelation 11-16

The Conflict of the Ages

In Revelation 1, John sees the ascended, glorified Christ. In Revelation 2-3, John reveals an overview of the various churches in the church age. In Revelation 4-5, John is translated into heaven where he sees the Lamb take the scroll, the title deed of earth, and begin the final chapter of earth's redemption. In Revelation 6-18, John is given a glimpse of the Day of the Lord as it transpires on earth. Seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls detail the devastation and destruction that fall on earth in judgment for mankind's sin and upon Satan's kingdom.

DAY ONE

Revelation 11

The timeline in Revelation is paused at various points to provide more information. Revelation 7 pauses to show the witnesses and martyrs during the tribulation. Chapters 10-14 pause to highlight the main characters that are involved in the tribulation—the angels, the two witnesses, the woman, the Child, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. Chapter 11 has been considered by many to be one of the most difficult chapters to interpret in the book of Revelation.

Pray and ask God to give you wisdom as you read Revelation 11:1-19.

Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. ³ And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

Write down what you learn about the two witnesses.

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. ⁶ They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they

desire. ⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, ¹⁰ and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. ¹³ And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴ The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying,

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
who is and who was,
for you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.

¹⁸ The nations raged,
but your wrath came,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear your name,
both small and great,
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

¹⁹ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. (ESV)

What are the three woes? (cf. 8:13; 9:12; 11:14, 15-19; 12:12)

Write down 3-5 observations from this song of the 24 elders.

The identification of the two witnesses is not given but their ministry seems to be very similar to Moses and Elijah, the two great prophets of God (cf. Matt. 17:3). **What stands out to you about the ministry of the two witnesses and/or about the world's response to them?**

What attributes and actions of God are praised in the song of the 24 elders (11:17-18)?

DAY TWO

Revelation 12

All of the events in world history, and particularly in the tribulation, are part of a larger spiritual conflict. Chapter 12 pauses to show us the bigger picture behind the events and conflicts that take place on earth.

Pray and ask God to give you wisdom as you read Revelation 12:1-17.

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

Describe this great sign.

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. ⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Describe this second sign.

⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon was

Write down what you learn about the dragon in these verses.

cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

How is the dragon overcome?

¹³ Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵ So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (NKJV)

What does the dragon do when he is cast down to earth?

Based on the information in these verses, who do you think the following represent?

The woman _____

The Child _____

The dragon _____

What do you learn about Satan from this passage? What are his tactics? How is he overcome?

DAY THREE Revelation 13

The spiritual conflict of the ages comes to a climax during the tribulation. The dragon (Satan) makes war against God on the earth by raising up his own “messiah” and prophet, both deceptively evil.

Pray and ask God to give you wisdom as you read Revelation 13:1-18.

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. ¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of

Write down what you learn about the beast.

What do you think is the message of 13:9-10 that we need to hear?

Write down what you learn about the second beast.

men. ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. ¹⁵ He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666. (NKJV)

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12. What further information does this passage give you about the beast and his influence and impact on the earth?

Why do you think people are so eager to follow the beast and this “false prophet”? What does this tell you about human nature?

The identification of the “mark” and the meaning of the number “666” has certainly created lots of discussion down through history. Numerous people have been identified as the Anti-Christ based on this number...all wrong! The Anti-Christ will be revealed in God’s time (2 Th. 2:3) and we are wise to avoid speculation and slander in the meantime. As for the meaning of the number, 666, this too will be fully known in God’s time. Perhaps the simplest understanding is that the three sixes represent the “unholy trinity” of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, all falling short of the fullness and perfection of God (which could be seen as 777).

DAY FOUR Revelation 14

The interlude of chapters 10-14 comes to a conclusion. The conflict of the ages is coming to a climax and Jesus Christ, the Lamb, will reign. Chapter 14 is filled with announcements of Christ's victory.

Pray and ask God to give you wisdom to understand as you read Revelation 14:1-20.

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. ³ And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. ⁴ These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

⁶ And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; ⁷ and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

⁸ And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

⁹ Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those

Write down what you learn about the 144,000 witnesses (cf. 7:1-8).

What is the first announcement?

What is the second announcement?

What is the third announcement?

who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”¹² Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”

¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.” ¹⁶ Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

¹⁷ And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe.” ¹⁹ So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles. (NASB)

What is the fourth announcement?

What is the fifth announcement?

Which of the five announcements stands out to you the most? Why?

This chapter announces the wrath of God upon earth. Whom does the wrath fall upon? Why?

DAY FIVE
Revelation
15-16

After the interlude of chapters 10-14, the narrative returns to the seven bowl judgments that are poured out at the seventh trumpet (11:15). These final seven judgments are poured out almost simultaneously at the very end of the tribulation, right before the return of Jesus Christ.

Pray and ask God to give you wisdom as you read Revelation 15:1-16:21.

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

² And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. ³ And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

“Great and amazing are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!
⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

⁵ After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, ⁶ and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. ⁷ And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, ⁸ and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”

² So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

³ The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.

What is finished after these seven plagues?

What attributes and actions of God are praised in this song?

The bowls are related to the cup of wrath in the OT (cf. Jeremiah 25:15; Isaiah 51:17). Jesus drank this cup for us...but those who refuse His grace must drink it for themselves.

Write down what happens with the pouring out of each bowl.

⁴ The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say,

“Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was,
for you brought these judgments.

⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
and you have given them blood to drink.
It is what they deserve!”

⁷ And I heard the altar saying,

“Yes, Lord God the Almighty,
true and just are your judgments!”

⁸ The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. ⁹ They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

¹⁰ The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. ¹³ And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. ¹⁴ For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ¹⁵ (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”)

¹⁶ And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸ And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. ¹⁹ The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰ And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. ²¹ And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe. (ESV)

What is the response of people to these judgments? What does that tell you about them?